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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05 INR-10 L-03 ACDA-12
NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00 DODE-00
NSC-05 /072 W
----------122197 151832Z /45
P 151730Z MAR 78
FM USMISSION USNATO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0001
INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
ALL NATO CAPITALS

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 USNATO 02685

E.O.11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: NATO, PORG
SUBJECT: ALLIANCE EAST-WEST STUDY: EUROCOMMUNISM ISSUE

REFS: (A) USNATO 2428, (B) USNATO 2183, (C) USNATO 1561
(D) USNATO 488
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1. SUMMARY: AS DESCRIBED REFS, ITALIAN AND FRENCH DELEGATIONS HAVE INSISTED THAT TWO PARAGRAPHS ANALYZING WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES IN PART II OF THE EAST-WEST STUDY BE DELETED. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF POSSIBLE APPROACHES FOR US TO TAKE ON THIS ISSUE, INCLUDING TAKING DIRECT ISSUE WITH THE ITALIANS AND FRENCH (WHICH WE DO NOT RECOMMEND), OR ATTEMPTING TO FIND ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE WHICH WOULD RETAIN SOME SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT. WE BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT WE SHOULD ACCEDE TO THE ITALIAN AND FRENCH REQUEST TO DELETE THE PARAGRAPHS. IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO FIND ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE WITH SUBSTANCE THAT WOULD ALSO BE SATISFACTORY TO ITALIANS AND FRENCH. WE DO NOT BELIEVE WE SHOULD JEOPARDIZE TIMELY COMPLETION OF THE STUDY AS A WHOLE BY PUTTING A HIGH PRIORITY ON RESOLVING TO OUR SATISFACTION THIS CONTENTIOUS
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AND POTENTIALLY DISRUPTIVE ISSUE. IN ANY CASE, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE THAT FRENCH AND ITALIANS WILL CHANGE THEIR POSITION, AND THUS WE DEEM IT INADVISABLE TO COMMIT US POLITICAL CAPITAL TO THIS ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE STUDY. WE DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, WE SHOULD RESIST FRENCH EFFORTS AT DILUTING LANGUAGE IN PART I ALREADY AGREED TO BY ITALIANS. END SUMMARY.

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2. REFS DESCRIBE HOW ITALIANS AND FRENCH ARE RESISTING SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSION OF WESTERN EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES IN CONTEXT OF EAST-WEST STUDY. SPECIFICALLY, THEY HAVE DEMANDED THAT PARAGRAPHS 47-8 OF ORIGINAL PART II (REF D) WHICH TREAT THIS SUBJECT BE DELETED AND HAVE GONE SO FAR AS TO REJECT AS "UNACCEPTABLE" DISCUSSION IN NATO OF THESE PARAGRAPHS. THE ISSUE HAS BEEN DEFERRED FOR THE MOMENT ALTHOUGH PERMREPS MAY BE REQUIRED TO ADDRESS THE SUBJECT AT SOME POINT (REF A); QUESTION OF FORMAL NAC CONSIDERATION CAME UP AT MAR 14 PERMREPS LUNCH (SEE SEPTEL).
3. THERE ARE SEVERAL POSSIBILITIES WE MIGHT PURSUE IN ADDRESSING THIS ISSUE IN NATO:

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(A) WE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER ALLIES, COULD TAKE ISSUE DIRECTLY WITH FRENCH AND ITALIANS AND ATTEMPT TO RETAIN THE CURRENT APPROACH IN PARAGRAPHS 47-8. WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THIS COURSE OF ACTION. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO CONVINCE OTHER ALLIES TO SUPPORT US IN A DIRECT CONFRONTATION AND WE WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE COMPLETION OF THE STUDY BY ENGAGING THE ITALIANS AND FRENCH SO FRONTALLY ON AN ISSUE OF SUCH IMPORTANCE TO THEM, AND ON WHICH THEY ARE NOT IN OUR VIEW PREPARED TO YIELD.

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(B) WE COULD ATTEMPT, IN COOPERATION WITH OTHERS, TO DRAFT LANGUAGE SATISFACTORY TO ITALIANS AND FRENCH WHICH STILL

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RETAINED MORE SUBSTANTIVE CONTENT THAN CURRENT PART I LANGUAGE (PARA 5, REF C). HOWEVER, WE SENSE LITTLE DESIRE TO DATE IN NATO TO ENGAGE IN SUCH AN EXERCISE. AS INDICATED REF A, THE BRITISH, WHO WOULD BE A LOGICAL CHOICE TO TRY TO COME UP WITH A COMPROMISE, FOR THE MOMENT AT LEAST SEEM DISINCLINED TO TACKLE THE PROBLEM. WE COULD TRY OUR HAND BUT IT IS QUESTIONABLE WHETHER WE WANT TO BE OUT IN FRONTON SUCH AN ISSUE. THE FRENCH AND ITALIANS FOR THEIR PART HAVE REFUSED TO OFFER ALTERNATIVE VERBIAGE, SAYING SIMPLY THAT PART I REPRESENTS THE LIMIT THEY WILL ACCEPT. THUS, WHILE TRYING TO NEGOTIATE AGREED LANGUAGE IS A VALID OPTION, THE PROSPECTS ARE NOT ENCOURAGING.

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(C) THE LAST OPTION WE SUGGEST IS TO ACCEDE, IN AS GRACEFUL A FASHION AS POSSIBLE TO THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN REQUEST. WE SHOULD, HOWEVER, RESIST FRENCH ATTEMPTS TO DILUTE ORIGINAL PART I LANGUAGE (REF A AND BELOW). WHILE FOLLOWING THIS OPTION WOULD MEAN DROPPING MUCH OF THE STUDY'S SUBSTANTIVE TREATMENT OF AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM, WE SHOULD SUBSEQUENTLY BE ABLE TO WEIGH IN MORE CONVINCINGLY AND STRONGLY REGARDING OUR OVERALL GOALS FOR THE STUDY (I.E., PART III) BY NOT HAVING COMMITTED OURSELVES ON THIS SINGLE

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4. ACCORDINGLY, WE RECOMMEND OPTION C, ALONG LINES DESCRIBED ABOVE. THIS WOULD NOT NECESSARILY PRECLUDE LENDING SUPPORT TO AND EVEN PARTICIPATING IN AN EFFORT TO DEVISE ALTERNATIVE LANGUAGE, SHOULD SUCH EMERGE, BUT WE WOULD NOT STIMULATE ANY SUCH EFFORT. ACTION REQUESTED: WASHINGTON GUIDANCE ON ABOVE APPROACH.

5. THERE FOLLOWS BELOW TEXT (MISSION TRANSLATION) OF PARA

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116, PART I AS PROPOSED BY FRENCH TO REPLACE CURRENT VERSION (PARA 5, REF C). THE PRINCIPAL CHANGE OCCURS IN THE FOURTH SENTENCE WHERE THE FRENCH HAVE REMOVED THE REFERENCE TO THE RUSSIANS' NEED TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND ELECTORAL REALITIES IN THEIR APPROACH TO WESTERN COMMUNIST PARTIES (ITALIANS HAVE NOT TO DATE OBJECTED TO ORIGINAL LANGUAGE). BEGIN TEXT:
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"IN THE THIRD WORLD ONE OF THE MAIN SOVIET CONCERNS WILL CONTINUE TO BE TO COUNTER CHINESE INFLUENCE BOTH AT INTERSTATE AND WHERE APPROPRIATE AT INTER PARTY LEVEL. WITHIN EUROPE THE PROBLEM IS MORE COMPLEX. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MORE INDEPENDENT STANCE BY CERTAIN WEST EUROPEAN PARTIES IS WEAKENING THE COHESION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNIST MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE AND WILL CONSTITUTE A CONTINUING CHALLENGE TO THE CPSU'S AUTHORITY. BUT THE PRESENT EVOLUTION IS CONTINUING AND IT IS CERTAINLY TOO EARLY TO DETERMINE WHAT DIRECTION THESE PARTIES WILL ULTIMATELY TAKE. ONE OF

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THE SOVIET PREOCCUPATIONS WILL CLEARLY REMAIN THE FEAR OF SEEING THE EVOLUTION OF THESE WEST EUROPEAN COMMUNIST PARTIES LEAD TO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT AND PERHAPS EVEN PROVIDE A POLE OF ATTRACTION FOR MEMBERS

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OF THE COMMUNIST PARTIES IN EASTERN EUROPE (IN ADDITION TO THAT ALREADY PROVIDED BY THE YUGOSLAV EXPERIMENT). THERE IS NO SIGN THAT THE CPSU HAS YET RESOLVED THIS DILEMMA TO ITS OWN SATISFACTION." END TEXT. BENNETT

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